

# Messi’s Miami and PSG progress to set up Club World Cup reunion

Botafogo, PSG, Miami all seal spots in high-stakes last 16 battles

● Atletico Madrid eliminated despite victory

● Porto, Al Ahly crash out

AFP | Miami

Inter Miami’s Lionel Messi faces a tantalising reunion with former club Paris Saint-Germain in the Club World Cup last 16 after both sides on Monday progressed to the knockout phase.

Miami drew 2-2 with Palmeiras to go through second in Group A, after the Brazilian side fought back from two goals down to seal top spot.

They now face an all-Brazil clash against Botafogo, who lost 1-0 to Atletico Madrid but progressed from Group B in second at the expense of the Spaniards.

Champions of Europe PSG won the group with a 2-0 victory over Seattle Sounders, paving the way for the clash with Messi and surprise package Miami.

Goals from Tadeo Allende and Luis Suarez had Miami on course for a second victory in the tournament after their shock win over Porto.

But Palmeiras struck twice in the last 10 minutes at Hard Rock Stadium through Paulinho and Mauricio to ensure they went through.

Suarez, Messi, Sergio Busquets, Jordi Alba and Miami coach Javier Mascherano will also face their former coach Luis Enrique, who guided them to the treble when in charge at Barcelona in 2015.

“We’re talking about the champions of Europe. We know many of their players and their coach, who I was lucky enough to have coach me, and I’ve always said he is the best in the world,” said Alba.

“I will connect with good friends there but once the game starts, we will compete, try to beat them, and why can’t we do it? This is football.”

Mascherano said Miami’s progress had elevated Major League Soccer.

“It’s a historic night for me because we are into the best 16



Paris Saint-Germain’s Georgian forward #07 Khvicha Kvaratskhelia decoys the ball kicked by Paris Saint-Germain’s Portuguese midfielder #17 Vitinha (L) to score the opening goal

teams in the world. All of the MLS has to be proud of Inter Miami,” he said.

Portuguese side Porto and Egypt’s Al Ahly were eliminated after a thrilling 4-4 draw which was not enough for either team to overhaul Palmeiras or Miami.

European champions PSG bounced back from their surprise defeat by Botafogo with a comfortable win in Seattle.

Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and Achraf Hakimi scored either side of half-time as the Ligue 1 champions advanced as group winners because of Botafogo’s late defeat to Atletico Madrid in Pasadena.

“It wasn’t easy because the pitch was very different to what we are used to in Europe so we couldn’t play with the fluidity that we like, but we adapted,” said PSG coach Enrique.

PSG top scorer Ousmane Dembele played no part for a third game running after travelling to the tournament with an injury.

### Atletico out

Atletico’s 4-0 defeat by Paris Saint-Germain in their opener left them needing a big win against Botafogo to progress.

Former France international Antoine Griezmann scored the game’s only goal, lashing home a Julian Alvarez cross in the 87th minute to give Atletico a victory that ultimately was in vain.

“We’re frustrated that we didn’t qualify -- we had six points,” Atletico coach Simeone said afterwards.



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JORDI ALBA

“At the end of the day we were punished because it wasn’t enough.”

Atletico needed a two-goal swing and were upset at penalty

### Standings

#### Group A

#	Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
1	Palmeiras	3	1	2	0	4	2	2	5
2	Inter Miami	3	1	2	0	4	3	1	5
3	Porto	3	0	2	1	5	6	-1	2
4	Al Ahly	3	0	2	1	4	6	-2	2

#### Group B

#	Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
1	PSG	3	2	0	1	6	1	5	6
2	Botafogo (A)	3	2	0	1	3	2	1	6
3	Atletico Madrid	3	2	0	1	4	5	-1	6
4	Seattle Sounders FC	3	0	0	3	2	7	-5	0



Al Ahly’s Moroccan defender #15 Achraf Dari and FC Porto’s Spanish forward #09 Samu Aghehowa fight for the ball



The Miami-PSG clash will reunite Messi, Suarez, Busquets and Alba with their former Barcelona coach Luis Enrique, who guided them to the 2015 treble - adding extra spice to the Club World Cup showdown

appeals being turned down.

“I’ve never seen anything like it, to be honest, I think we should have been awarded two penalties,” complained winger Giuliano Simeone, the coach’s son.

On Tuesday, already qualified Bayern Munich face Benfica and eliminated Auckland City take on Boca Juniors in Group C, with one more last 16 spot on the line.

The English Premier League’s Chelsea later tackle Esperance Tunis with the winners to progress alongside Flamengo, who face Los Angeles FC.

Lionel Messi #10 of Inter Miami CF controls the ball